

Navy Symposium Commemorates Destroyer Centennial

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WASHINGTON—In celebration of the 100th anniversary of the U. S. Navy's destroyer force, the Surface Warfare Directorate of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations recently held a one-day symposium on November 7 at the U.S. Navy Memorial and Naval Heritage Center in Washington D.C.

The symposium began with a wreath laying ceremony to commemorate the distinguished legacy of the destroyer Sailor and all of the men and women who serve our nation's Armed Forces, and pay tribute to those who made the ultimate sacrifice.

"Today's ceremony is in honor to those who 'rode to the sound of the guns', those who fought to preserve freedom and democracy, those who found a resting place at sea," stated Rear Adm. Harry Ulrich, Director of Surface Warfare.

Ulrich also addressed the Navy's current operations and how one-third of today's Navy is deployed in three oceans, six seas in support of our nation's global war on terrorism.

"What will future generations say in 2052, who stand here at this very podium, what will they say about the destroyers and crews of the past? What legacy will we leave them," said Ulrich. "Hopefully it will be the programs we are working today to improve tomorrow's Fleet."

Posted beside the U.S. Navy Ceremonial Band, a Navy bugler sounded out Taps as the commemorative wreath was placed in front of the center's Lone Sailor statue, a representative of all of the dedicated men and women who serve in the U.S. Navy around the world.



Many of the guests who attended the wreath laying also participated in the Destroyer Symposium to discuss the contributions, current programs and future developments of the U.S.



Navy's 21st Century destroyer, particularly the Navy's newest destroyer in development, the DD (X).

Naval Sea Systems Command Commander, Vice Adm. Phillip Balsile, discussed

many of the ship's technology improvements and advancements being engineered into the new platform to decrease manpower requirements, enhance weapon systems, power projection and overall operability, not just with other U.S. Fleet assets, but also with the assets of joint and coalition forces.

"We are a nation at war," said Balisle. "As a nation at war, we must begin to fight more effectively and efficiently. We must also learn to fight together in order to defeat the threats of today's environment."

Balisle added that in addition to fighting along side our joint and coalition forces, our assets must have the design capability to allow for upgrades. This included having a Fleet the Navy can evolve and adapt to carrying missions and threat arenas.

"DD(X) is just one of the many ships that we are looking at and designing to enable our Fleet to conduct its missions in any environment," Balisle said. "DD(X) provides tomorrow's destroyermen a platform upon which to build their legacy."